

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

DATE July 2, 1986FULL NAME Milton Harold Sills SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER [REDACTED]
(No initials if you can possibly get full name)ADDRESS [REDACTED]CITY Bloomington STATE Georgia ZIP CODE 31302DATE OF BIRTH January 16, 1943 (This is important and should be exact)APPROXIMATE AGE 43 (To be used ONLY when date of birth is not known)RELIGION unknown NATIONALITY AmericanOCCUPATION Police Chief (terminated 5-22-86)

EDUCATION _____

WEIGHT approx 185 HEIGHT 6' RACE WhiteCOLOR OF HAIR grey COLOR OF EYES blue

OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS OR INTERESTS _____

MARRIED OR SINGLE single CHILDREN _____
(Number, ages, and names, if possible)

NAME OF SPOUSE _____

SCOUTING CONNECTIONS:

UNIT #	CITY	STATE	POSITION	DATE REGISTERED	DATE RESIGNED
202	Pooler	Georgia	S.C.	1982	MAY 1986

SPECIAL RECOGNITION _____

SUSPENDED OR DENIED REGISTRATION FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

*HAS BEEN CHARGED AND INDICTED FOR CHILD MOLESTATION
IN CHATHAM AND EFFINGHAM COUNTIES IN GEORGIA*

SPECIFY THE FACTS WHICH LEAD YOU TO RECOMMEND DENIAL OF REGISTRATION AND LIST ATTACHED
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (STATE ONLY KNOWN FACTS, NOT RUMOR, CONJECTURE OR SPECULATION):

F. STARON

JUL 18 1986

RS-509

4/14/83-nah

INDEXED

MAR 23 '87

JOSEPH L. ANGLIM

Signed [Signature]
SCOUT EXECUTIVECouncil Coastal Empire #99

March 25, 1987

Mr. Wofford E. Dalphrus



Paul Ernst, Director
Registration, Subscription &
Statistical Service

PE/cre

cc: Southeast Region

READY FOR FILE

MAR 25 1987

SHIRLEY MEYER

CONF023921

KARSMAN, BROOKS, PAINTER & CALLAWAY, P. C.

STANLEY M. KARSMAN
 CHARLES C. BROOKS
 PAUL W. PAINTER JR.
 TIMOTHY F. CALLAWAY III
 JAMES L. ORR JR.
 JANA F. BRAUN
 R. CLAY PATTERSON
 ARAN R. DOLE
 DAVID H. CONNOLLY JR.
 KENNETH L. ROYAL
 DAVID RUSSELL SMITH

June 5, 1986

Mr. Eugene M. Smith
 Unit Manager
 BSIS

Atlanta, Georgia 30358-2001

Re: Your File Number : 835-72051 69 19
 Insured : Boy Scouts of America
 Claimant : William Walton Carter
 D/A : 9-27-70
 Our File Number : 4485

Dear Gene:

As we have discussed, there is a possibility we will have to deal at trial with allegations that Chris Blaine had homosexual tendencies while he served as scoutmaster of Troop 30. Although we will have more to say about this in our next report, we want you to know about a controversy in the Savannah area that could make any evidence of homosexuality particularly damaging.

We are enclosing an article that appeared in the June 5 edition of the Savannah Morning News. This article describes the indictment of the police chief of a suburb of Savannah. The police chief is accused of having molested three boys, under the age of fourteen, while they were boy scouts in a troop for which the police chief served as scoutmaster. The article says that one of the incidents occurred at Camp Strachan, which is a facility owned and operated by the Coastal Empire Council.

This is not the first newspaper article on the police chief, as he has been under investigation for several weeks. Although earlier articles made passing references to his involvement with the boy scouts, this is the first article in which specific allegations are made of a scout having been molested.

It is impossible to evaluate the effect this development could have on our case. We do, however, expect our case to go to

WCS: M. M. M. M. M.

WCS: M. M. M. M. M.

By JAN SKUTCH
Blair White

Yet more damaging is your action with the

KIDSLING two victims in that jurisdiction. Bills was Pooler's police chief for

JAMES W. Ruling, Jr., violated the trust of the community and the young men of Chatham Superior Court Judge James W. Head Monday sentenced a former Piedmont Police Chief Milton H. Sills to 20 years in prison on charges of child molestation and sodomy.

Three victims, members of the Piedmont Boy Scout troop Sills headed, were attacked while on Boy Scout outings at an Boy Scout property.

the youth of our society and in particular, those youths who befall your passions. For the reader of their lives they live with this stigma, only of man's weakness on passion but of their never-ending question, "In whom shall we place our trust? A scoutmaster? A police chief? A what leader can we have faith?"

Judge James Head to Ex-Chief Mito

main. He was suspended as chief May 22, 1911. He was actively involved in Boy Scout work there. He was indicted by the Chatham County grand jury in June on five counts of child molestation and two counts of sodomy. Each act charged in the indictment occurred while he was scoutmaster of the Pooler Boy Scout troop. Each act occurred while the scouts were on campouts in the woods and/or on scout property.

"You care as a leader in school as well as chief of police in your community. The community that honored you as chief suffers with shame and with the shame you have caused upon them!" Head said.

"The court, in considering your deeds, (their) effects upon the children and our society, finds it appropriate to sentence you to 20 years in prison," Head ruled. "These good citizens should not have to suffer from your misdeeds, but they do."

"Yet more damaging is your a-

tion with the youth of our society and without any pre-agreement as to what those youths who believe in particular passions, for the term "passions," Head sentenced Sills for their lives they live by this? On each count, and ordered it, aligning, not only of man's weakness is served at the same time. It was on passion but of the never-ending carried a maximum penalty question? In whom shall we place it? Years.)

"Your trust? A scoundrelmaster? A police? Head also ordered Sills to pay \$1,500 to the parents of three victims to defray costs of treatment. The sentence will be for a 20-year term Sills received in Effingham County.

ent on sentencing each under age 14, urged Head to give Sills maximum punishment. "There's not very much that we can do," We hope and pray that the court could, in its infinite wisdom maximize the sentence that this man (Sills) so rightfully deserves," that is, a father of one of the victims, told each of the Head.

"How do you plead to each of these charges, guilty or not guilty?" Head asked.

"Guilty, Your Honor," Sills received last

ly Super's

sponded.

Ex-Chief Sentenced on Sodomy Charges

By JAN SKURCH

Yet more damaging is your action with the

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Chief White

What leader can we have faith?

County grand jury in June on five

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yet more damaging is your ac-

what leader can we have faith?

County grand jury in June on five

Christine Engle (Camp)
CS-65-099

Savannah Morning News 6/5/86 Chatham Indicts Ex-chief on Molestation Counts

By JAN SKUTCH
Staff Writer

Former Pooler Police Chief Milton Sills was indicted by the Chatham County grand jury Wednesday on a total of five counts of child molestation and two counts of sodomy involving three victims.

The three separate indictments list three boys, each under age 14. Each victim reportedly was a Boy Scout at some time during his relationship with Sills. In each of the three cases, at least one of the incidents occurred at a Boy Scout facility in

Pooler or Chatham County.

The local indictments charge Sills with:

- Two counts of child molestation involving a boy. One of the incidents allegedly occurred at Boy Scout Camp Strachan between June 1 and June 30, 1983, while the second occurred in May 1983 on Adams Road in Bloomingdale, the indictment charges.
- One count of child molestation and two counts of sodomy involving another boy in a camp trailer at the Pooler Boy Scout Building on Bourne Avenue. The child molestation allegedly occurred in October and the sodomy during February and on April 25.

- Two counts of child molestation involving a third boy. One of the acts allegedly occurred in the Pooler Boy Scout building on April 18. The other, involving the same victim, allegedly occurred at a place identified as "Devil's Woodyard," located in Chatham County near Pooler, between Jan. 1 and March 31.

Sills, 43, was indicted on Monday by the Effingham County grand jury on six counts of child molestation and one count of aggravated sodomy against a minor in connection with incidents involving two boys, 10 and 12 years old.

Effingham County Superior Court Judge

Joseph Neville Tuesday set a \$15,000 bond for Sills, but ordered that he remain "locked up" at Georgia Regional Hospital, where he was voluntarily admitted May 20.

Sills, police chief in the westside community for four years, was actively involved with the Boy Scouts. He was suspended as chief May 9 and resigned May 22.

At Tuesday's bond hearing in Springfield, Sills' attorney, Michael Gardner, told Neville that Georgia Regional Hospital physician Dr. Charles Usher initially had refused to release Sills and described Sills as "suicidal."

Sills

Continued From Page 1A

Sills worked as a security guard at Chatham City Apartments when former Bloomingdale police chief Mike Argust hired him in June 1976, Strozier said.

"It was one of these deals where you just don't check (the background of applicants) like you should," Strozier said.

After Sills began working in Bloomingdale "he immediately started undercutting Mike (Argust)," Strozier said. "He would tell me little things Mike was doing that he didn't particularly like. I just think when a man gives you a job, you ought to be loyal."

Pooler hired Sills about six years ago and made him chief two years later.

City officials have refused to release Sills' resume, citing privacy laws. However, Pooler City Manager Dan Massey said it lists local employment since 1972. Sills is 43.

In the last six years, Sills ignited Pooler's enthusiasm and convinced people to donate time, money and talents to converting the old Starland Dairy property into one of the state's nicest Boy Scout facilities.

He earned a reputation as a man who could turn wayward boys into responsible citizens, teach them skills and improve their grades and attendance at school.

"I don't know if he was trying to repent or what, but we know he helped out a lot of kids," one city official said. "Some of the things he did were really super."

Once named "Policeman of the Year" and "Citizen of the Year," Sills recently received a letter of commendation from President Reagan, praising him for his outstanding work with the Scouts.

Shearouse said the first complaint against Sills surfaced about a year ago when a distraught woman

told him the chief had molested her nephew. Shearouse, who talked to the boy's parents, said the mother and father steadfastly maintained that the charges were ridiculous.

"I believed the parents because I had no facts," he said.

Six months later, Shearouse said, a 10-year-old boy ran up to Sills during a parade, "hugged him around the neck and kissed him."

After the two incidents, Shearouse said he became wary of "the way the boys would hang on him (Sills)" and the way the chief touched and treated the youngsters.

"Any time you're dealing with a man's life and charge him with something like this, you better have the facts," Shearouse said. "I had my suspicions, but just because some child gets up and makes an accusation, you don't want to throw darts at him. We were dealing with a man's life."

About a month ago, Shearouse said, a 15-year-old boy told him that the chief had molested one of the boy's friends. After the teen-ager convinced his friend to come forth, city officials talked to the boy and his parents.

The boy's mother told the officials that Sills gave her son expensive gifts and \$30 to \$40 in spending money, Shearouse said.

"It was a serious-enough accusation that you couldn't pass it off," said Councilman Jimmy Anderson, who oversees the police department. "Even if it wasn't true, it was serious enough that he had to be cleared. Not until the GBI got involved with it did I ever dream it would reach this magnitude."

Shearouse and Anderson called in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation the day after they spoke with the boy's family. Agents then talked with four families and told the city they had a definite case of child molestation on their hands.

"When you're dealing with a man of that high of a caliber, or who you thought was of that caliber, I don't know how to describe my reaction," Anderson said.

Last year, in an interview with the Savannah Morning News and Evening Press, Sills talked about his work with the Boy Scouts.

"One thing wrong with kids today is they lose respect for themselves," Sills had said. "My key role is to make them learn respect not only for themselves but for other people. Scouting teaches them to be a better citizen, a better person. I've seen it change a lot of the boys' lives. If a boy will stay with it six months, I can change him. I can change his attitude."

One Pooler resident who has known Sills for six years said the chief had an extraordinary fascination with guns and owned a veritable armory. He spoke often of his "kick-ass" fantasies and combat experiences in Vietnam, although Shearouse said Sills was only in the Marine Reserves and never saw active duty.

"He had a Rambo complex and liked to talk about guns and all those things that go along with the Rambo complex," the friend said. "Guns were an erogenous topic with him. If there was ever a clue, and I never had a clue, that was it."

Sills also formed a "commando" squad among Boy Scouts, who dressed in camouflage and carried toy rifles - an activity that kept at least one parent from allowing his son to join the Scouts.

"I didn't like the glorification of war," the parent said.

Sills also taught boys how to shoot weapons, including M-16 automatic rifles, on the firing range.

"He portrayed himself as a macho type person around women and children. He came out with that (tough talk) daily," Shearouse said.

About 11:30 a.m. on May 9 - the day the Pooler council suspended the chief pending the outcome of the investigation - GBI agents telephoned Sills from Shearouse's office and told him they needed to discuss an urgent matter with him. Sills said he had to take his truck in for repairs and would be back in 30 minutes.

utes, Shearouse said.

Sills never returned.

In a trailer he kept at the Boy Scout ranch, GBI agents found his police uniforms folded in perfect military precision. On his bed and table he had laid out his gun, belt, identification and the Marine Corps ring he had proudly worn.

Sales receipts for clothes purchased at Wal-Mart the day before were still in the trailer and the GBI concluded Sills had changed clothes and dropped out of sight.

Shearouse called an emergency council meeting at 2 p.m.

"The GBI continued to investigate and found more and more boys involved and more and more boys coming forth," the mayor said.

While Sills was still being sought, he sent his resignation to City Hall via his girlfriend. Since Sills had not been charged nor indicted, the city rejected it.

"I think he thought that we would accept the resignation, drop the charges and tell him to get out of town," Shearouse said.

When the GBI gathered enough evidence to seek indictments, the city sent word through Sills' girlfriend that if he didn't turn himself in, the GBI would pick him up. When Sills didn't come voluntarily, GBI agents found Sills in the first place they looked - his girlfriend's house.

When the GBI arrived, Sills said he wanted to confine himself voluntarily to Georgia Regional Hospital, a psychiatric facility. After Sills admitted himself, the city council reconsidered and accepted his resignation. Less than two weeks later, two grand juries handed down 14 indictments involving five children.

"I feel that there are more victims," Shearouse said. "Some parents did not allow us to talk to their children. We feel that there are others but we were refused consultation."

Not everyone in Pooler believed Sills was capable of molesting young boys. At first, residents turned out to support the chief. One group planned a parade in his honor until city officials talked them out of it.

"It's pathetic, it's tragic and it's terrible for the kids," one resident said. "The kids really worshipped him."

During last year's interview, Sills had said of the Boy Scouts, "This isn't something I could just quit and walk away from. I have all these kids to think about."

Now the kids are the only things Pooler parents are thinking about.

July 24, 1986

Mr. Wofford E. Malphrus
Scout Executive
Coastal Empire Council, No. 99

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Milton H. Sills

Dear Wofford:

Thank you very much for all the information which you have sent us concerning the above-named individual. The Confidential Record Sheet will be most helpful in identifying Mr. Sills should he try to register at some other time in a different location.

Please keep us informed as legal action takes place. We would like to know the final outcome to complete our file.

Thank you again for your help in protecting the youth of America.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration, Subscription &
Statistical Service

eak

cc: Southeast Region

READY FOR FILE

JUL 23 1986

SHIRLEY MEYER

CONF023927

June 10, 1986

Mr. Wofford E. Malphrus
Scout Executive
Coastal Empire Council, No. 99

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: /Hilton H. Sills

Dear Wofford:

Thank you for your letter of June 5 concerning the above-named individual. These newspaper clippings will be most helpful to us as we establish a file enabling us to refuse future registration attempts.

I am enclosing a Confidential Record Sheet which I would like to have completed. This will enable us to identify Mr. Sills should he move to some other location and try to register with the Boy Scouts of America.

I would also like for you to follow this case and keep us informed as any legal action is completed. We would like to have the final conviction if it takes place, and also the sentencing, to strengthen our files.

Thank you again for your good help.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration, Subscription &
Statistical Service

eak

Encl.

cc: Southeast Region

READY FOR FILE

JUN 1 1986

SHIRLEY MEYER

CONF023928



COASTAL EMPIRE COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

*Disputed
- 6-5-86
L.P.*



June 5, 1986

Mr. Paul Ernst
Director of Registration Service
Boy Scouts of America
National Office
[Redacted]

CONFIDENTIAL

Irving, Texas 75062 - 1296

Dear Paul:

Enclosed are several news clippings regarding the arrest and subsequent indictment of one Milton H. Sills. He is registered as the Scouting Coordinator of Troop S-0202. The chartered organization is the Pooler Georgia Police Department.

In conversation with the Mayor of Pooler, Chief Sills has been officially removed from any and all responsibility with the police department and the Boy Scout Troop.

It is our opinion that there is sufficient information to place his name on the confidential list and hereby request such action.

Sincerely yours,

Wofford E. Malphrus
Scout Executive

WEM/sr

cc: George Atherholt
Tom Burgess



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Liberty, Long, Screven, Tattnall, & Toombs Counties

CONF023929

Official Of Pooler Suspended

By RICHARD GREER
Staff Writer

Pooler Police Chief Milton H. Sills was suspended without pay Friday amid allegations of sexual misconduct, according to city officials and the GBI, which is investigating the case.

By late Friday afternoon, attempts by Georgia Bureau of Investigation agents to locate Sills for questioning were unsuccessful, according to city councilmen.

"We have had accusations made of sexual misconduct,"

City Councilman Richard White said. White, as did a string of other city offi-



Sills

cials, declined to comment further on Sills, a former Bloomingdale police officer and an active Boy Scouts volunteer.

The Pooler Boy Scout Troop scoutmaster said he understood that the allegations involved Boy Scouts "to a certain degree."

"I am shocked," said Dave Schneider, the scoutmaster. Schneider said Sills, a coordinator of the 50-person troop, "volunteered a lot of his time and efforts." The Pooler Police Department was the sponsoring organization for the troop.

"We go on campouts every month, and there was nothing to indicate anything like that," Schneider said.

Mayor Jack Shearouse could not be reached for comment. GBI Agent Harry Coursey would not comment on the case, other than to say the city requested the bureau's assistance.

City Attorney Ron Ginsberg said he heard of the alleged misconduct about two days ago.

"Some rumors surfaced," Ginsberg said.

Ginsberg would not say if the alleged sexual activity involved juveniles or adults.

"We have been told not to discuss it while it's in the investigative stages," Mayor Pro-Tem Terry Tuten said. "Of course something had to be done. The GBI is conducting an investigation."

"I'm not going to say anything," City Manager Dan Massey said.

Councilman Al DeFilippis said that by 5 p.m. Sills still had not been located.

Glenda Shearouse of the Westside News, and the ex-wife of Mayor Shearouse, said she knew of the allegations but could not comment on them.

The city council suspended the chief in an emergency session. It was not known if the chief was present. Capt. D.L. Knaust has been named acting chief of the seven-man department.

Sills joined the Pooler department in 1978 and was named police chief in May 1982. Sills was cited in 1978 as Police Officer of the Year by the West Chatham Exchange Club.

Toddler Tulips



BALTIMORE — Leslie Genevieve, even at the tender age of 15 months, enjoys the beauty of a tulip as she stops to enjoy the flowers during a

stroll through Baltimore's Sherwood Garden. Leslie, who lives in Wisconsin, is visiting her grandmother in Baltimore.

3 Killed in Appling Collision

By RICHARD GREER
Staff Writer

A passenger car crashed into the rear of an Appling County Public Schools bus Friday afternoon, killing all three persons in the car, police said.

None of the 10 students on the bus were seriously injured, police and school officials said.

"There didn't seem to be any injuries of the children on the bus," Appling County Sheriff Louis Parker said.

Parker said a small car rear-ended the bus about six miles east of Baxley on Ten Mile Highway about 3:30 p.m.

Killed were Elton Kirkland, 36; Robert Harper, 53;

and Loren Bennett, 30, all of Baxley.

The bus was nearly empty, Superintendent Twigg Jr. said, because the driver was "off" of his route. They were on their way home from made elementary school.

The elementary school is in Baxley.

Twigg said one or two children suffered bruises. They were treated and returned home. The bus carried the rest of the children home.

Emergency medical technicians were called to the scene, but were unable to revive the victims.

"We were extremely lucky with the" Twigg said.

The bus sustained some damage, Twigg said. The car, Parker said, "was pretty well torn up."

Holley Electric Resolves P

By BETH REESE
Brunswick Bureau

BRUNSWICK — Holley Electric Corp. has agreed to pay the state of Georgia \$20,000 in damages in connection with a spill of toxic chemicals at the firm's plant in Jesup in 1983, according to a proposed settlement agreement.

Assistant Attorney General Patricia Barmeyer said Friday that the settlement agreement, reached last week, had been submitted to Brunswick Circuit Superior Court Judge Gordon Knox Jr. for approval.

The state of Georgia filed suit against the company and its owner, Lynwood Holley of Jacksonville, Fla., for more than \$1.35 million in March 1983. State attorneys charged that PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls, which are believed to cause cancer) and explosive hazardous wastes were mishandled at Hol-

ley's facility in Jesup.

Following preliminary injunction hearings that same year, Knox ordered Holley to remove contaminated soil from the plant grounds as well as from adjacent drainage ditches and dirt roads that served an adjacent residential area. The hazardous wastes brought to the Holley plant from an Army depot in New Jersey, were disposed of by the military in Florida.

The state's original claim for \$1.35 million in damages was dropped, after Holley workers conducted a cleanup under the supervision of the state's Environmental Protection Division. The initial claim constituted the attorneys' estimates of what a state-supervised cleanup operation would have cost. The company is reported to have spent more than \$100,000 on the cleanup.

The settlement will replace state claims involving a jury award of \$100,000 in punitive damages and more than \$67,000 in cleanup

penalties.

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Search is On For Pooler's Former Chief

By RICHARD GREER

Staff Writer

Pooler Police Chief Milton H. Sills, wanted since Friday for questioning in connection with allegations of sexual misconduct, had not been located by late Saturday.

Sills was suspended Friday during an emergency meeting of the Pooler City Council. The action was unanimous after the two-hour meeting. City Councilman Benjamin White said.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation was asked to probe the allegations. GBI Agent Harry Coursey has declined to comment on details of the case, as have most city officials.

Capt. D.L. Knaust, named acting chief at the Friday council meeting, said Saturday that Sills had not been found. City Attorney Ron Ginsberg said city officials tried to locate Sills throughout Friday night.

"To my knowledge, no one has heard from him during the past 18 or 24 hours," Ginsberg said early Saturday. "He may be somewhere trying to sort things out."

White said the council investigated Sills' conduct before the suspension, but said no charges have been filed against the chief.

Sills, a former Bloomingdale police officer, and with the Pooler department since 1973, was an active Boy Scout volunteer.

White said he understood that the accusations did not concern Sills' role as a Boy Scouts' coordinator. Dave Schneider, scoutmaster of the Pooler Boy Scout Troop, said Friday he thought the case involved Boy Scouts "to a certain degree."

Schneider said "there was nothing to indicate" that Sills was involved in sexual misconduct. The chief was named Police Officer of the Year in 1973 by the West Chatham Exchange Club.

Sills Fell Quickly From Hero to Villain

By VANESSA ORLANDO

Staff Writer

When former Pooler police chief Milton Sills last week faced 14 counts of sexually abusing children in two counties, he was no longer the kindly, self-assured Boy Scout troop leader Pooler citizens had come to admire and respect in the last six years.

Instead, he had become the source of unparalleled pain, loathing and betrayal in a small community that prides itself on a wholesome lifestyle and fierce dedication to family and children.

Grand juries in Effingham and Chatham counties indicted Sills on 11 counts of sodomy and three counts of child molestation.

Seemingly overnight, the 50-plus youngsters, once proud members of one of Georgia's largest and finest Boy Scout troops, became stigmatized while Pooler's people collectively searched their souls to figure

out what had happened.

"You've got a community here that's got a lot of readjusting to do," said one resident. "It's not only the children who are going to be scarred by this but the community is going to be scarred too."

Such a revelation would stun any community, but Pooler is an innocent town with a love and concern for its children that is almost a cliché. The children are the town's pride and joy, raised to do what policemen say.

And Milton Sills, the low-key police chief who appeared to share their concerns, earned the trust and admiration of people who now say their children became the victims rather than the beneficiaries of his interest.

"Everyone in Pooler thought very highly of him," Mayor Jack Shearouse said. "It was a shock to people and it still is. He

had this image of a fine, outstanding police chief — the kind of man you'd like to have in your community. Milton loved these children. He really did. He just loved them in the wrong way."

Bloomington Mayor-elect Billy Strozzer, a councilman for 10 years, said, in retrospect, he now sees warning signs he never noticed before.

"He would start out with the parents and get to be real good friends with them," Strozzer said. "Then he would take the kids fishing out on the lake. I had no suspicions until after he left here, because I would see him with the same kid all the time and see him spending money. He was always with the kids on his off time. I thought that was kind of odd, but some people probably thought I was odd thinking that."

See SILLS, Page 1A



MILTON SILLS: In Boy Scout uniform

Sills

Continued From Page 1A

Sills worked as a security guard at Chatham City Apartments when former Bloomingdale police chief Mike Argust hired him in June 1976, Strozier said.

"It was one of these deals where you just don't check (the background of applicants) like you should," Strozier said.

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"It was a serious-enough accusation that you couldn't pass it off," said Councilman Jimmy Anderson, who oversees the police department. "Even if it wasn't true, it was serious enough that he had to be cleared. Not until the GBI got involved with it did I ever dream it would reach this magnitude."

Shearouse and Anderson called in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation the day after they spoke with the boy's family. Agents then talked with four families and told the city they had a definite case of child molestation on their hands.

"When you're dealing with a man of that high of a caliber, or who you thought was of that caliber, I don't know how to describe my reaction," Anderson said.

Last year, in an interview with the Savannah Morning News and Evening Press, Sills talked about his work with the Boy Scouts.

"One thing wrong with kids today is they lose respect for themselves," Sills had said. "My key role is to make them learn respect not only for themselves but for other people. Scouting teaches them to be a better citizen, a better person. I've seen it change a lot of the boys' lives. If a boy will stay with it six months, I can change him. I can change his attitude."

One Pooler resident who has known Sills for six years said the chief had an extraordinary fascination with guns and owned a veritable armory. He spoke often of his "kick-ass" fantasies and combat experiences in Vietnam, although Shearouse said Sills was only in the Marine Reserves and never saw active duty.

"He had a Rambo complex and liked to talk about guns and all those things that go along with the Rambo complex," the friend said. "Guns were an erogenous topic with him. If there was ever a clue, and I never had a clue, that was it."

Sills also formed a "commando" squad among Boy Scouts, who dressed in camouflage and carried toy rifles - an activity that kept at least one parent from allowing his son to join the Scouts.

"I didn't like the glorification of war," the parent said.

Sills also taught boys how to shoot weapons, including M-16 automatic rifles, on the firing range.

"He portrayed himself as a macho type person around women and children. He came out with that (tough talk) daily," Shearouse said.

About 11:30 a.m. on May 9 - the day the Pooler council suspended the chief pending the outcome of the investigation - GBI agents telephoned Sills from Shearouse's office and told him they needed to discuss an urgent matter with him. Sills said he had to take his truck in for repairs and would be back in 30 minutes, Shearouse said.

utes, Shearouse said. Sills never returned.

In a trailer he kept at the Boy Scout ranch, GBI agents found his police uniforms folded in perfect military precision. On his bed and table he had laid out his gun, belt, identification and the Marine Corps ring he had proudly worn.

Sales receipts for clothes purchased at Wal-Mart the day before were still in the trailer and the GBI concluded Sills had changed clothes and dropped out of sight.

Shearouse called an emergency council meeting at 2 p.m.

"The GBI continued to investigate and found more and more boys involved and more and more boys coming forth," the mayor said.

While Sills was still being sought, he sent his resignation to City Hall via his girlfriend. Since Sills had not been charged nor indicted, the city rejected it.

"I think he thought that we would accept the resignation, drop the charges and tell him to get out of town," Shearouse said.

When the GBI gathered enough evidence to seek indictments, the city sent word through Sills' girlfriend that if he didn't turn himself in, the GBI would pick him up. When Sills didn't come voluntarily, GBI agents found Sills in the first place they looked - his girlfriend's house.

When the GBI arrived, Sills said he wanted to confine himself voluntarily to Georgia Regional Hospital, a psychiatric facility. After Sills admitted himself, the city council reconsidered and accepted his resignation. Less than two weeks later, two grand juries handed down 14 indictments involving five children.

"I feel that there are more victims," Shearouse said. "Some parents did not allow us to talk to their children. We feel that there are others but we were refused consultation."

Not everyone in Pooler believed Sills was capable of molesting young boys. At first, residents turned out to support the chief. One group planned a parade in his honor until city officials talked them out of it.

"It's pathetic, it's tragic and it's terrible for the kids," one resident said. "The kids really worshiped him."

During last year's interview, Sills had said of the Boy Scouts, "There isn't something I could just quit and walk away from. I have all the kids to think about."

Now the kids are the only thing their parents are thinking about.

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Chatham Indicts Ex-chief on Molestation Counts

By JAN SKUTCH

Staff Writer

Former Pooler Police Chief Milton Sills was indicted by the Chatham County grand jury Wednesday on a total of five counts of child molestation and two counts of sodomy involving three victims.

The three separate indictments list three boys, each under age 14. Each victim reportedly was a Boy Scout at some time during his relationship with Sills. In each of the three cases, at least one of the incidents cited occurred at a Boy Scout facility in

Pooler or Chatham County.

The local indictments charge Sills with:

- Two counts of child molestation involving a boy. One of the incidents allegedly occurred at Boy Scout Camp Strachan between June 1 and June 30, 1983, while the second occurred in May 1983 on Adams Road in Bloomingdale, the indictment charges.

- One count of child molestation and two counts of sodomy involving another boy in a camp trailer at the Pooler Boy Scout Building on Bourne Avenue. The child molestation allegedly occurred in October and the sodomy during February and on April 25

- Two counts of child molestation involving a third boy. One of the acts allegedly occurred in the Pooler Boy Scout building on April 18. The other, involving the same victim, allegedly occurred at a place identified as "Devil's Woodyard," located in Chatham County near Pooler, between Jan. 1 and March 31.

Sills, 43, was indicted on Monday by the Effingham County grand jury on six counts of child molestation and one count of aggravated sodomy against a minor in connection with incidents involving two boys, 10 and 12 years old.

Effingham County Superior Court Judge

Joseph Neville Tuesday set a \$15,000 bond for Sills, but ordered that he remain "locked up" at Georgia Regional Hospital, where he was voluntarily admitted May 20.

Sills, police chief in the westside community for four years, was actively involved with the Boy Scouts. He was suspended as chief May 9 and resigned May 22.

At Tuesday's bond hearing in Springfield, Sills' attorney, Michael Gardner, told Neville that Georgia Regional Hospital physician Dr. Charles Usher initially had refused to release Sills and described Sills as "suicidal."

